

I am a musician and recording artist who requires access to radio airplay in order to achieve success. Centralized programming, that is, non-localized programming, makes this almost impossible while simultaneously reducing the number of employment positions in radio.

The only radio outlets remaining where all of the programming is done at the station for the express purpose of serving the specific local audience is college and university radio. This is deplorable.

I have not heard a show featuring local talent, by any definition of the word "local", since the nineteen eighties.

The FCC needs to either redefine "local programming" or reintroduce all of the safeguards it used to have in place to ensure that the interests of local communities are being met.

Programming decisions need to be made at the local level. We have seen situations where huge broadcasting corporations dictate content either directly or by implication (where non-compliance may cause a DJ or programmer or journalist to lose his job), such as Clear Channel's list of blacklisted songs (any with anti-war themes) or Sinclair's attempts to air documentaries with slanted and unfounded allegations on the eve of an election. It is bad enough that only major label artists get airplay but when a corporation can use its stations to push a political agenda and influence an election, democracy itself is dead in America!

In the case of Clear Channel, we have a corporation that is also in the business of live concerts. Naturally they will push airplay for their music artists who are touring.

Many news articles have also pointed out that payola is alive and well but now works through "independent record promoters" who provide money to stations and bill record companies for ensuring certain songs get airplay. The FCC needs to redefine rules that prevent any source outside the station from influencing its programming decisions through gifts or threats of any kind.

In addition, the FCC needs to institute rules that impose limits on the amount of programming that is allowed to come from a centralized source. Protecting the jobs of local programming talent goes hand-in-hand with ensuring that programming serves the local community. This includes allowing stations to air the music they see fit and not having "national playlists" imposed on them.

I hope the FCC will take this matter seriously and act soon to return control of the airwaves to the public, where it belongs, and out of the hands of corporate interests, be they broadcasting conglomerates, independent record promotion firms or major label record companies.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

